

10 Tips on Epidurals

<p>What is an Epidural An epidural is a way to give pain medication during labor and delivery. You get medicine through a very thin tube (catheter) that is placed in your back</p>	<p>Are Epidurals safe? Studies have shown epidurals to be safe for both mother and baby. A small number of women are not able to have an epidural for medical reasons ask your care provider if n epidural is right for you.</p>	<p>When can I get an epidural? Most believe it is best to wait for active labor to begin (after 4 centimeters dilatation) before getting an epidural. You may not be able to get an epidural if you are very close to giving birth because the baby will arrive before the epidural begins to work.</p>	<p>Can I get an epidural for a cesarean? Yes! If you have a cesarean birth, extra medication will be put through the catheter to make you numb from just below your breasts to your toes. During the surgery, you will feel the doctors touching your belly and feel the pressure when the baby is lifted out, but no pain. The epidural can be used for pain relief for the first day.</p>
<p>How is an epidural given? You will be asked to sit on the side of the bed or lie down with your back curved forward over your belly. A nurse may hold your shoulders and encourage you to breathe slowly through contractions (labor pains). As the epidural is placed, you will need to stay very still even during contractions.</p>	<p>How does it feel? First you will have a cold wet feeling as your back is cleansed where the epidural will be given. Next you will feel something like pinpricks as the local anesthetic is given to numb a small area of your back. Last, you will feel a small area of pressure as the needle is put into the numb area. The thin tube is placed through the needle into your back, and the needle is removed. The tube is taped to your back</p>	<p>What can I expect? As medication runs through the tube you should begin to feel numb from your belly button down to your toes. Your legs may feel warm and heavy, but you should be able to wiggle your toes. Most women who get an epidural during labor are aware of pressure from their labor pains and the baby moving down, yet are very relieved with the pain relief.</p>	
<p>How long does it usually take for the epidural to work? After the epidural is placed, you will be asked to lie on your back until the epidural numbs both sides of your body. This usually takes about ten to twenty minutes.</p>	<p>When does the epidural wear off? The epidural will wear off (The numb feeling will be gone) within a couple hours after the baby is born. Good news! Even with an epidural most women can breastfeed the baby within an hour after the delivery.</p>	<p>What else should I know about epidurals? An epidural...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires that electronic fetal monitoring be used and that intravenous fluids be given to you. • May help you rest, and perhaps even nap, before you deliver • Might make you feel a bit shaky even though you are not cold. • Can slow down your labor you might need medication to get it going strong again • Can make your blood pressure drop. You may be given IV fluids and a special medication if needed • Can make it harder to change positions. You may have to stay in bed • Might make it harder for you to push the baby out, it you are very numb • Might not work evenly all over your belly. More medication usually gives more relief • May make it easier for you to use the bathroom. The nurse may put a small tube in your bladder to empty it • May increase the need for forceps or vacuum OR for cesarean birth • Might, on rare occasions, cause a headache or back pain after delivery 	
<p>Getting an epidural: It's up to you Remember, most often it is your choice to receive pain medication during labor and birth. Keep an open mind about pain relief choices until you are in labor. Many women are able to get through labor and birth without medication and instead, use comfort measures such as breathing techniques, water, movement, the birth ball, prayer, and music. Some women find a combination of comfort measures and medications work best. It is up to you to decide!</p>			